TUTELA MINORUM

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Plenary Assembly plans next phase of Commission's work

Implications of the Commission's new statutes • Survivor engagement and the Annual Report • Digital Safeguarding in Church environments and online child protection • Understanding vulnerability and strengthening prevention • Safeguarding and consecrated life

Vatican, 5 October 2026 – The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors concluded its October Plenary Assembly in Rome this weekend after five days of work focused on accountability, the involvement of victims and survivors, and the strengthening of protection structures throughout the global Church.

Meeting from 28 September to 2 October, the Commission examined the forthcoming Third Annual Report on the Churches' protection policies and procedures, the implementation of the Commission's new statutes, regional priorities and the sustainability of protection initiatives worldwide.

The Commission's members approved by referendum the *Instrumentum laboris* for the Fourth Annual Report, due for publication in 2027 and emphasised that the meaningful participation of victims and survivors in the Annual Report process remains essential to understanding institutional responses to abuse and shaping policies capable of preventing its recurrence.

The Commission reviewed the next phase of the Commission's finalised Universal Safeguarding Framework (USF), including plans for its dissemination and implementation in various ecclesiastical contexts. The discussion centred on ensuring the guidelines are easily accessible, whilst building on existing ecclesiastical and regional structures to support local implementation.

A significant part of the Commission's discussions centred on consecrated life. The plenary examined protection within religious communities and the specific experiences of women religious, including the abuse of power, of conscience, of spiritual authority and sexual abuse. Members also considered the structural and cultural barriers that may discourage disclosure and complicate effective responses.

The Commission will host the second annual meeting on the prevention of abuse in consecrated life in Rome from 9 to 11 December 2026, under the theme 'Communion, Care

and Justice: Mutual Relationships for a Shared Mission'. The synodal learning workshop will bring together around 300 participants from five continents and will conclude with an audience with the Holy Father.

The Assembly also addressed the understanding of vulnerability, including situations shaped by relationships, circumstances and power imbalances affecting the dignity of the human person. The Study Group on Vulnerability received unanimous support for a revised work programme, with a final compendium to be presented to the Plenary Assembly at its March 2027 session and published later that year.

Building on the substantial work of the Online Abuse Study Group and inspired by the Holy Father's encyclical *Magnifica humanitas,* the Commission also reinforced its commitment to addressing the growing challenge of technology-facilitated exploitation and child abuse. The Commission examined how digital technologies, artificial intelligence and online platforms are used in the pastoral care of children and adolescents, in order to understand the associated risks and how to equip parents, parishes and Catholic institutions to address them.

The Commission also welcomed broader collaboration with international partners and entities within the Curia exploring AI, in order to ensure that the dignity, safety and wellbeing of children remain at the heart of technological development and governance.

The Assembly examined the Memorare initiative, paying particular attention to accountability, sustainability and adaptability as it moves from funding proposals to culturally adaptable implementation. Members emphasised the importance of monitoring progress and ensuring effective impact, whilst developing sustainable models that can draw on local networks, partnerships and diversified funding.

Over the course of the five days, members reaffirmed a shared principle: safeguarding credibility depends on the ability to translate commitments into measurable actions. The Commission concluded the Assembly with a renewed commitment to listening, transparency, accountability and sustained support for local churches, recognising protection as an integral part of church life and institutional responsibility.

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For further information: Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors
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